



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas marks National Health Center Week with Two- Mile Community Walk

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, community stakeholders and county employees, kicked off National Health Center Week in the Second Supervisorial District with a two-mile walk at St. John's Well Child and Family Center in Los Angeles. The walk included a stop at Umma Community Clinic and ended at Mount Carmel Park where a host of free health services awaited, including rapid HIV testing, blood pressure screenings, and a healthy cooking demonstration.

"Health is important this week and every week in the Second Supervisorial District," said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. "We are here to get the two-mile party in motion and we are here to make a commitment to our health all year round."

The organized walk came after the Board of Supervisors unanimously approved a motion by Supervisor Ridley-Thomas to commend the important service of health centers by proclaiming August 5 thru August 11, National Health Center Week in Los Angeles County.

"We are here to promote fitness and bring the community together to do something that's never been done before," said Southside Coalition of Community Health Centers Program Services Coordinator Yolanda Rogers. "All seven health centers are here together in one place at one time," she continued.

Umma Community Clinic, South Central Family Health Center, St. John's Well Child and Family Center, Eisner Pediatric and Family Medical Center, To Help Everyone Clinic, Watts Health Care Corporation, and South Bay Family Health Care representatives informed participants on the wide range of health services available to them and encouraged walkers to pursue healthy lifestyles, offering them free items such as pedometers, visors, and fresh fruit.

"Being healthy is being happy, it's as simple as that," said Jackie Provost of Umma Community Clinic in South Central. "In my family everyone has high blood pressure and I can see how health can have a negative impact on someone's livelihood."

St. John's Right to Health Committees Organizer Gary Poe Jr. shared Jackie's sentiment. "Being healthy means freedom," said Poe. "Without health you have restrictions on what you can and can not do." To Poe, what made the walk especially great was the turnout and that people of all ages and all races were unified with one purpose and one cause – to live long healthy lives.

Each year, community health centers provide medical, dental, and health services to over 20 million patients across the nation without regard to income, health insurance status, or pre-existing medical condition.

"Health centers are meeting the primary medical needs of millions of individuals throughout the nation and transforming lives on a daily basis," said Supervisor Ridley-Thomas. "That's a huge undertaking that calls for both recognition and celebration."

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